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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - IRAN NASA - DISCOVERY LANDING
PARIS - WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2005

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

1. IRAN
2. NASA - DISCOVERY LANDING

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

IRAN'S RESUMPTION OF ITS NUCLEAR ENRICHMENT PROGRAM IS ONE OF TODAY'S MAJOR STORIES, WITH CATHOLIC LA CROIX HEADLINING: "WORLD PRESSURE ON IRAN." THE EDITORIAL URGES THE EUROPEANS NOT TO GIVE UP TOO SOON: "IRAN MAY BE BARTERING FOR MORE. AFTER ALL, THIS IS WHAT NORTH KOREA HAS BEEN DOING WITH THE U.S." (SEE PART C)

FM DOUSTE BLAZY IS INTERVIEWED IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE PARISIEN: "IT IS STILL POSSIBLE TO NEGOTIATE WITH IRAN. TEHRAN MUST ACCEPT OUR OFFER TO RETURN TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE. FRANCE DOES NOT FAVOR THE OPTION OF SANCTIONS AGAINST IRAN BY THE UNSC."

WHILE POLITICAL ANALYSTS WARN AGAINST THE DANGERS OF IRAN AS A NUCLEAR POWER, SCIENTIFIC EXPERTS ARE MORE RESERVED. IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION BRUNO TERTRAIS FROM THE FOUNDATION FOR STRATEGIC RESEARCH SAYS IN AN INTERVIEW: "FOR THE TIME BEING THERE HAS BEEN NO VIOLATION OF THE NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY. LEGALLY, TEHRAN HAS VIOLATED NO INTERNATIONAL TEXT. BUT THE IRANIANS ARE VERY CLEVER. THEY ARE USING THE SITUATION FOR DIPLOMATIC ESCALATION." AN OPINION SHARED BY GEORGES LE GUELTE, A FORMER OFFICIAL OF THE IAEA: "THE IAEA WILL BE ABLE TO OBSERVE THAT LEGALLY, IRAN HAS NOT TRANSGRESSED INTERNATIONAL LAW. IT IS RESPECTING INTERNATIONAL TREATIES. THE IRANIANS HAVE ONLY VIOLATED THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE EUROPEANS."

REGIONAL OUEST FRANCE INTERVIEWS A RESEARCHER FROM THE CNRS, AZADEH KIAN-THIEBAUT: "WHAT THE IRANIANS ARE SEEKING IS DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE U.S. AS LONG AS WASHINGTON REJECTS THE IDEA OF OFFERING DIRECT GUARANTEES, THE IRANIANS WILL CONTINUE TO USE THE NUCLEAR THREAT."

THE DISCOVERY LANDING MAKES THE FRONT PAGE OF RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO, WHICH DEVOTES ITS EDITORIAL TO NASA'S "BITTER-SWEET" VICTORY. (SEE PART C)

RIGHT-OF-CENTER ECONOMIC LES ECHOS CARRIES AN EDITORIAL COMMENTARY ON JOHN BOLTON'S NOMINATION TO THE UN AND KOFI ANNAN'S "HAWKISH REFORMISM." "HAS ANNAN TURNED HAWKISH TO WELCOME BOLTON WHO IN TURN MAY BE READY TO BECOME A REFORMER? ANNAN HAS BEEN TRYING TO INITIATE A WIDER DEFINITION OF TERRORISM AND TO PUSH THE UN TO ADOPT THE INITIATIVES AGAINST WMD. HE HAS ALSO INITIATED A STRONG REFORM PROGRAM WHICH IS IN LINE WITH WHAT THE U.S. ADVOCATES. THE UN HAS BECOME UNGOVERNABLE BUT IT IS BETTER FOR THE U.S. TO HAVE OPTED TO REMAIN 'INSIDE' EVEN WITH A HAWK THAN TO GO 'OUTSIDE' THE ORGANIZATION."

KOFI ANNAN IS ALSO CENTRAL TO A COMMENTARY IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LIBERATION BY THE MOROCCAN-BORN FRENCH LANGUAGE AUTHOR TAHAR BEN JELLOUN: "THE TERRORISTS' DREAM OF REPLACING EGYPT'S REGIME WITH AN ISLAMIC REPUBLIC IS THE WORLD'S NIGHTMARE. BECAUSE EGYPT IS CLOSE TO THE WEST, RECEIVES AMERICAN FINANCIAL AID, AND HAS SIGNED PEACE WITH ISRAEL, ISLAMISTS WANT TO DESTROY IT. IF EGYPT FALLS TO FUNDAMENTALISM, THE ENTIRE REGION WILL BE SHAKEN. THE WEST HAS TO WATCH OUT FOR TERRORISM BUT IT MUST ALSO QUESTION THE WAY IT LOOKS AT THE ARAB WORLD AND TO COMMIT ITSELF TO REPAIR THE DEEP WOUNDS THAT HAVE BEEN INFLICTED ON ARABS. THE RECIPE IS TO BE FAIRER AND MORE JUST. THE WORLD NEEDS A NEW, VISIONARY LEADER. KOFI ANNAN COULD BE THAT PROVISIONAL LEADER. BUT HE WOULD HAVE TO RECEIVE A STRONG MANDATE AND BE READY TO LOCK HORNS ONCE AGAIN WITH THE AMERICANS. THE ARAB WORLD NEEDS MORE JUSTICE. RESPECT AND DIGNITY."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

IRAN

"EUROPE LOOKING FOR SOLUTION WITH IRAN"

MAURIN PICARD IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (08/10): "EUROPEAN DIPLOMATS ARE HARBORING GRIM LOOKS IN VIENNA AFTER THE COLD SHOWER THEY RECEIVED FROM THE IRANIANS. BUT DIPLOMATIC REALITY CALLS FOR MORE SUBTLETY: NO ONE WANTS TO BRING THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR ISSUE BEFORE THE UNSC. NOT THE AMERICANS, WHO ARE MIRED IN IRAQ, NOR THE EUROPEANS FOR WHOM SUCH A STEP WOULD BE THE PRELUDE TO INTERNATIONAL SANCTIONS AND THE CONFIRMATION OF THEIR FAILED DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS. IF THE IRANIANS WERE TO CROSS THE YELLOW LINE WHICH THE AMERICANS AND THE ISRAELIS INTERPRET AS A 'POINT OF NO RETURN,' THE EUROPEANS WOULD BE FACING A DILEMMA: TO LET THE IRANIANS GO AHEAD WITH THEIR NUCLEAR ENRICHMENT PROGRAM OR START THE INTERNATIONAL SANCTIONS PROCEDURE."

"NUCLEAR IMPUNITY"

YVES PITETTE IN CATHOLIC LA CROIX (08/10): "IRAN'S INITIATIVE IS NOT GOOD NEWS. WHILE MAJOR POWERS HAVE LEARNED TO POLITICALLY HARNESS THEIR WEAPONS THROUGH DETERRENCE, WE MUST TODAY BE MORE CONCERNED WITH REGIONAL FACE-OFFS SUCH AS CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN OR IRAN AND ISRAEL. NOTHING INDICATES THAT IRAN IS READY TO GIVE UP ITS HOSTILITY TOWARDS ISRAEL. BUT BECAUSE THE WORST IS NEVER CERTAIN, THE EUROPEANS HAVE NOT GIVEN UP THEIR EFFORTS FOR NEGOTIATIONS. IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT IRAN IS PLAYING A GAME OF BLACKMAIL IN ORDER TO GET MORE FROM THE EUROPEANS. AFTER ALL, NORTH KOREA IS DOING JUST THAT WITH THE AMERICANS. THE LESSON SHOULD BE CLEAR: IT IS DIFFICULT TO DEMAND ANYTHING FROM A NUCLEAR POWER, ALBEIT A LIMITED ONE. THE IRANIANS KNOW IT AND ARE PLAYING THEIR HAND ACCORDINGLY."

"A PROVOCATION FROM IRAN"

KEN WEINSTEIN FROM THE HUDSON INSTITUTE IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (08/10): "IRAN'S DECISION TO RESUME ITS URANIUM ENRICHMENT PROGRAM IS BOTH A THREAT AND A PROVOCATION. IT MARKS THE FAILURE OF EUROPE'S U.S.- SUPPORTED EFFORTS. IRAN MUST IN NO WAY BE RECOMPENSED FOR ITS NUCLEAR BLACKMAIL. THE U.S. AND THE EUROPEAN TROIKA MUST REMAIN FIRM. NEGOTIATIONS AND/OR GOING BEFORE THE UNSC CANNOT BE EFFECTIVE IF NEGOTIATING NATIONS ARE NOT READY TO USE FORCE IN CASE OF FAILURE. JUST WHEN THE MIDDLE EAST IS IN THE MIDST OF MAJOR CHANGES, IRAN'S GAME AIMS TO SLOW DOWN THAT PROCESS. A NUCLEAR BOMB CONTROLLED BY IRAN WOULD BE THE GREATEST POSSIBLE ENCOURAGEMENT TO ALL EXTREMISTS. IRAN'S NUCLEAR THREAT WEIGHS NOT ONLY ON THE MIDDLE EAST BUT ALSO ON EUROPE. FRENCH AND AMERICAN OBJECTIVES IN THE MIDDLE EAST ARE GREATLY THREATENED BY IRAN'S AMBITIONS. WE MUST BE READY TO DEAL WITH THIS CHALLENGE."

NASA - DISCOVERY LANDING

"AN OBSOLETE SHUTTLE"

JEAN-MICHEL SALVATOR IN RIGHT-OF-CENTER LE FIGARO (08/10): "WITH THE SHUTTLE DISCOVERY'S RETURN, NASA IS REGISTERING ITS OWN LITTLE REVENGE. THE IMAGES WERE BEAUTIFUL, BUT THEY WERE ACCOMPANIED WITH AN ADMISSION OF IMPOTENCE. THE BILLION DOLLARS SPENT WERE NOT ENOUGH TO REPAIR THE SHUTTLE'S THERMAL SHIELD. YESTERDAY'S MISSION APPEARS VERY MUCH LIKE A SWAN SONG FOR NASA. IN SPITE OF YESTERDAY'S SUCCESS, SPACE SHUTTLES WILL BE REMEMBERED LIKE A FALSE GOOD IDEA. IN THIS ADVENTURE, NASA HAS LOST LOTS OF MONEY, PART OF ITS PRESTIGE AND ITS DREAMS OF SPACE CONQUESTS." HOFMANN